

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 /026 W

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R 101100Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4887

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

S E C R E T VIENTIANE 4899

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, PFOR, LA

SUBJ: LAO PROTOCOL NEGOTIATIONS: SOUVANNA MAKES

TWO CONCESSIONS TO PATHET LAO

REF: VIENTIANE 4844

BEGIN SUMMARY: AT JULY 6 MEETING WITH PHOUMI, PRIMIN MADE TWO CONCESSIONS TO LPF IN MILITARY FIELD WITHOUT RECEIVING ANYTHING IN EXCHANGE. THIS DEVELOPMENT PROBABLY EXPLAINS LPF OPTIMISM RE PROGRESS IN NEGOTIATIONS. SOUVANNA'S MOVE HAS UNDERCUT PHENG'S NEGOTIATING POSITION AND RISKS ALIENATING FAR GENERAL STAFF. END SUMMARY.

1. WHEN I CALLED ON PHENG, EVENING JULY 9, HE WAS UPSET ABOUT PRIMIN GIVING WAY TO LPF ON TWO ISSUES WHICH PHENG SAID FAR GENERAL STAFF HAD CONSIDERED IMPORTANT. PHENG SAID THAT HE HAD NOT REPEAT NOT ATTENDED JULY 6 MEETING BETWEEN PRIMIN AND PHOUMI (WHICH MAY EXPLAIN HIS PREVIOUS RELUCTANCE TO TALK TO ME ABOUT THIS MEETING, AS REPORTED REFTEL) AND THAT HE ONLY HEARD OF RESULTS FROM PRIMIN NEXT DAY, JULY 7. DURING JULY 6 MEETING, PRIMIN HAD AGREED TO LPF REQUEST FOR 32 BOUNDARY STAKES AT SITES PROPOSED IN ARTICLE 12 OF LPF DRAFT PROTOCOL. (RLG DRAFT PROPOSED 62 STAKES,

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INCLUDING THE 32 DEMANDED BY LPF. THE RLG'S ADDITIONAL

30 STAKES WOULD HAVE ESTABLISHED RLG CLAIM TO CONTESTED TERRITORY OR TO TERRAIN WHERE RLG HAD NOMINAL PRESENCE AT TIME OF CEASEFIRE.) PRIMIN ALSO AGREED DURING JUNE 6 MEETING TO WITHDRAW RLG PROPOSAL FOR THE STATIONING OF JOINT LAO CONTROL TEAMS AT 47 SITES, AS SET FORTH IN ARTICLE 21 OF RLG DRAFT PROTOCOL. FAR GENERAL STAFF HAD ATTACHED CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE TO SENDING JOINT CONTROL TEAMS TO THESE SITES BECAUSE IT WOULD HAVE GIVEN FAR ACCESS TO LOCATIONS SUCH AS SAM NEUA, PHONG SALY AND OTHER POINTS INSIDE LPF-HELD ZONE.

2. PHENG SAID THAT SOUVANNA DID NOT EXTRACT OR, FOR THAT MATTER, DEMAND ANY CONCESSIONS FROM PHOUMI IN EXCHANGE FOR HIS ACQUIESCENCE IN LPF POSITION ON THE TWO ABOVE-MENTIONED POINTS.

3. WHEN PHENG MET WITH PHOUMI ON JULY 7, PHENG TRIED TO REOPEN DISCUSSION ON EMPLACEMENT OF BOUNDARY STAKES AND STATIONING OF JOINT CONTROL TEAMS, THE TWO SUBJECTS WHICH PHOUMI HAD DISCUSSED WITH PRIMIN. PHOUMI REPLIED THAT SOUVANNA HAD ARBITRATED DIFFERENCES ON THESE TWO ISSUES AND HE THEREFORE CONSIDERED THE TWO TOPICS CLOSED. PHENG TOLD ME THAT HE WAS UPSET BY SOUVANNA'S HIGHHANDED WAY OF MAKING CONCESSIONS TO LPF WITHOUT CONSULTING WITH HIS NEGOTIATOR OR WITH FAR GENERAL STAFF AND THOUGHT THAT FAR WOULD CRITICIZE PRIMIN FOR MAKING THESE UNILATERAL CONCESSIONS.

4. I ASKED PHENG WHETHER PRIMIN HAD TALKED TO HIM ABOUT HIS INNERMOST THINKING ON LPF DEMAND FOR VICE PRIME MINISTERSHIP OF SOUPHANOUVONG. PHENG CONFIDED THAT SOUVANNA HAD TOLD PHOUMI THAT IN THE EVENT OF SOUVANNA'S ABSENCE FROM LAOS, HE WOULD DESIGNATE SOUPHANOUVONG AS ACTING PRIME MINISTER SINCE HIS BROTHER IS THE "MOST COMPETENT AND SOCIALLY MOST ACCEPTABLE" MEMBER OF A FUTURE CABINET TO FILL THE NUMBER ONE POSITION IN THE GOVERNMENT. HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO PHENG, SOUVANNA REMAINS OPPOSED TO FORMALIZING THIS ARRANGEMENT BY INCLUDING IT IN THE PROTOCOL. PHENG SAID PHOUMI FOUND THIS FORMULA UNACCEPTABLE AND LPF

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CONTINUES TO HOLD OUT FOR PROVISION IN PROTOCOL GIVING LPF POSITION OF DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER.

5. TALKING IN GENERAL TERMS ABOUT NEGOTIATIONS, PHENG OPINED THAT SOUVANNA'S CONCESSIONS MADE JULY 6 CONTRIBUTED TO OPTIMISM LPF LEADERS VOICED IN VIENTIANE ON PROGRESS IN NEGOTIATIONS. PHENG SAID THAT SOUVANNA IS IMPATIENT WITH SLOWNESS IN NEGOTIATIONS. ALTHOUGH

SOUVANNA PAYS LIP SERVICE TO LETTING LPF REFLECT  
ON THE DIFFERENCES SEPARATING THE TWO LAO PARTIES,  
ACTUALLY HE IS DETERMINED TO MOVE NEGOTIATIONS FORWARD  
RAPIDLY AND THIS ACCOUNTS FOR WHAT PHENG CONSIDERS  
UNNECESSARY UNILATERAL CONCESSIONS.

6. I AM REPORTING OTHER ASPECTS OF MY DISCUSSION WITH  
PHENG RE SPECIFIC ARTICLES IN DRAFT PROTOCOL IN SEPTEL.  
DEAN

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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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**Concepts:** BOUNDARY DETERMINATION, COALITION GOVERNMENT, AGREEMENTS, NEGOTIATIONS, PEACE TALKS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 10 JUL 1973  
**Decaption Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** golinofr  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
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**Enclosure:** n/a  
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**Page Count:** 3  
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**Previous Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Reference:** 73 VIENTIANE 4844  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** golinofr  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 28 NOV 2001  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <28-Nov-2001 by thigpegh>; APPROVED <20-Dec-2001 by golinofr>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** LAO PROTOCOL NEGOTIATIONS: SOUVANNA MAKES TWO CONCESSIONS TO PATHET LAO  
**TAGS:** MOPS, PFOR, LA, LPF, (SOUVANNA PHOUMLA), (PHOUMLI)  
**To:** n/a  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005